

REMARKS

Applicants have carefully reviewed this Application in light of the Office Action mailed March 27, 2003 (Paper No. 12). Claims 1-6 were previously canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 15 and 25 have been canceled and Claims 7-14, 16-24 and 26-30 are pending in this Application. Claims 7-30 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, Claims 8 and 18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, Claims 7-9, 17-19 and 26 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and Claims 10-16, 20-25 and 27-30 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103. Applicants have amended Claims 7, 8, 17, 18 and 26 to further define various features of Applicants' invention. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and favorable action in this case.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 7-30 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the art that the inventors, at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention.

Specifically, the Examiner states that "the specification fails to teach how . . . 'a peak in transmission for normal incidence light at a wavelength greater than an exposure wavelength' could be achieved." (Paper No. 12, Page 2). Applicants have amended Claims 7, 17 and 26 and submit that the Specification clearly teaches how to "shift a peak in transmission for normal incident light to a wavelength greater than an exposure wavelength." For example, as the thickness of anti-reflective coating 64 increases, the wavelength at which pellicle 50 has a transmission peak also increases. (Specification, Page 17). Furthermore, by increasing the physical thickness of the pellicle film from 845 nm to 855 nm, the transmission peak occurs at a slightly higher wavelength. (Specification, Page 18).

Applicants submit that Claims 7, 17 and 26 now meet the requirements of section 112, first paragraph. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejections to Claims 7-14, 16-24 and 26-30.

Claims 8 and 18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention.

Applicants have amended Claims 8 and 18 and submit that Claims 8 and 18 now meet the requirements of section 112, second paragraph. Applicants further submit that the amendments are fully supported by the Specification. For example, the Specification discloses that the off-axis transmission of light may be increased by designing the optical thickness of film 51 to be less than or equal to one-quarter of the exposure wavelength greater than a design thickness that produces a transmission maxima at the exposure wavelength. (Specification, Pages 13-14). As such, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejections to Claims 8 and 18.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 7-9, 17-19 and 26 stand rejected by the Examiner under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,742,386 issued to Noriyuki Nose et al. (hereafter "Nose").

Nose discloses an apparatus for detecting foreign matter on a substrate. The substrate may be a pellicle formed of nitrocellulose. (Col. 1, Lines 44-47). The apparatus monitors the transmittance or the reflectivity of the pellicle and corrects the amount of light projected onto a surface based on the monitored value. (Col. 2, Lines 47-53). Corrective measures are performed by varying the intensity of the light beam. (Col. 5, Lines 38-39).

Claim 7 recites a pellicle comprising a "thin film formed to cooperate with a photomask and facilitate projection of an image including spatial information from the photomask onto a surface."

Claim 17 recites a photolithography system comprising "an amorphous fluoropolymer thin film operable to transmit approximately ninety-nine percent (99%) of off-axis light at an exposure wavelength such that an image projected onto a surface by the photomask includes spatial information."

Claim 26 recites a method for performing photolithography comprising "projecting the radiant energy through the opening in the photomask to form an image on a surface, the thin film operable to facilitate projection of spatial information associated with the image."

Applicants respectfully submit that the cited reference fails to disclose each and every element of Applicants' invention. Nose fails to teach a pellicle comprising a "thin film formed to cooperate with a photomask and facilitate projection of an image including spatial information from the photomask onto a surface," as recited by amended Claim 7. Nose also fails to disclose a photolithography system comprising "an amorphous fluoropolymer thin film operable to transmit approximately ninety-nine percent (99%) of off-axis light at an exposure wavelength such that an image projected onto a surface by the photomask includes spatial information," as recited in amended Claim 17. Finally, Nose fails to teach a method for performing photolithography comprising the step of "projecting the radiant energy through the opening in the photomask to form an image on a surface, the thin film operable to facilitate projection of spatial information associated with the image," as recited in amended Claim 26. The cited reference fails to disclose the recited limitations and, therefore, cannot anticipate Claims 7, 17 and 26.

Given that Claims 8-9 depend from Claim 7, and Claims 18-19 depend from Claim 17, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 8-9 and 18-19 are allowable. As such, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejections and allow Claims 7-9, 17-19 and 26.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 16 stands rejected by the Examiner under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Nose. Claims 10-15, 20-25 and 27-30 stand rejected by the Examiner under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Nose in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,657,805 issued to Yasunori Fukumitsu et al. (hereafter "Fukumitsu").

Claims 10-14 and 16 depend from and provide further patentable limitations to allowable Claim 7. Claims 20-24 depend from and provide further patentable limitations to allowable Claim 17. Claims 27-30 depend from and provide further patentable limitations to allowable Claim 26. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejections and allow Claims 10-14, 16, 20-24 and 27-30.

CONCLUSION

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's careful review of the application. Applicants have now made an earnest effort to place this case in condition for allowance in light of the amendments and remarks set forth above. For the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the rejections and full allowance of Claims 7-14, 16-24, and 26-30, as amended.

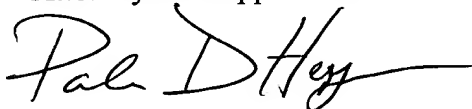
Applicants also include a Petition for Extension of Time (Two-Month), along with a check in the amount of \$410.00 for the filing fee.

Applicants believe no further fees are due at this time, however, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees to Deposit Account No. 50-2148 of Baker Botts L.L.P. in order to effectuate this filing.

If there are any matters concerning this application that may be cleared up in a telephone conversation, please contact Applicants' attorney at 512.322.2581.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachment(s): **Petition for Extension of Time (with appropriate filing fee)**